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AN

O R A T I O N,

ON THE

MATERIAL GROWTH AND TERRITORIAL PROGRESS

OF THE

UNITED STATES,

DELIVERED AT

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1839.

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BY CALEB CUSHING.

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Margaret Leckie  
June 26, 1936





## ORATION.

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WE have reached, in the progress of time, another Anniversary of the Independence of the United States. That gracious Providence, which led our forefathers hither in the pursuit of civil and religious liberty for them and their children; which watched over them in the first feeble beginnings of their political existence; which nurtured and fostered their infant commonwealths into the bone and gristle of manhood; which nerved their souls for the issue when the dread struggle for separate nationality came on; which in that crisis of their fate gave patriotism to their councils and victory to their arms, and which guided their noble efforts to lay the foundations of the great fabric of constitutional freedom we inherit from them,—that good Providence has continued to smile upon our country, and permitted us at this day to be the witnesses and the partakers of its grandeur and prosperity.

Thanks be to God, then, above and before all,—to Him, the author and the finisher of so good a work,—thanks be to Almighty God,—thanks from a thousand altars and from millions of grateful hearts, be sent up to Heaven this day, for the unequalled blessings vouchsafed to our fathers and to us!

And our highest and first duty of cheerful acknowledgment and thanksgiving to God discharged, it becomes us that we next do fitting honor to those pure and wise men, the agents of His will in the colonization, establishment, growth and stability of these United States. To govern, it has been said, a society of freemen, by a constitution, founded on the eternal rules of right reason, and directed to promote the happiness of the people and of every individual, is one of the highest prerogatives which can belong to humanity. But is it not more glorious still, to originate, to invent, to found, to establish into all future time, such a constitution of government? Surely, insomuch as the creator is above the thing created. Men, in general, are the fruit of the subsisting facts, amid which they find themselves to be born and bred. In general, it is the chief task of the good and patriotic of each successive generation, to preserve, promote, extend and improve the social institutions transmitted to them by their progenitors. It is the rare felicity of a few individuals, in occasional periods of time, to be themselves the founders of great empires; themselves to plant the seed of laws, customs, and political doctrines, destined to spring up into a vigorous growth, overshadowing the world; themselves to dictate the opinions and mould the desti-

nies of nations unborn. This is indeed to emulate the creative energies and the mysterious prescience, which rank among the high attributes of the Omniscient ; and it was the sublime function performed by the great men of the primordial days of the Republic.

English, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, each had come to the New World on their separate errand ; differing in language, in laws, and in customs ; most of them zealous in the cause of religion, but without identity of religious faith ; Catholics fleeing from the persecution of Protestants, Protestants from the persecution of Catholics, and Protestants from the bigotry of fellow Protestants, as if to demonstrate that no sect of men is to be trusted with dominion over the conscience of others ; all the victims of wrong at home, and all prepared by community of suffering to combine against a common oppressor, and to assume in due time the attitude of one great independent Republic in place of detached Colonies held in forced and unnatural dependence on Europe.

Forced and unnatural, I say ; for the truth is universal ; whenever a European Colony has grown up to maturity, independence is its only congenial condition ; to cross the Atlantic for the laws which are to govern a society, and for the men who are to administer those laws, is contrary to nature, which teaches men the right of self-government ; is unjust in principle, absurd in reason, and answers no other end but to misgovern the Colony for the gratification of the pride or the rapacity of the Mother Country. However the interested sophistry of the foreign office-holders quartered on a Colony may seek to disguise the truth, it is to be taken as an axiom of political science, not only that liberty, but that even the good government of what is called a parental despotism, is in general incompatible with the colonial condition. Present the fact in a tangible shape to the mind : suppose the people of the United States to be governed, not by a government in their own land, accessible to daily application, but situated four thousand miles off beyond sea,—not by magistrates and legislators of their own election,—not even by an hereditary prince and aristocracy whom they have any practicable means to influence,—but by some obscure and irresponsible clerk in a bureau in London, who is absolute lord and dictator of their fortunes through the nominal authority of a Secretary of the Colonies or of Parliament. This, in substance, it is distinctly and officially admitted by loyalists and by patriots, by Tories and by Whigs, by Sir Francis Head and by the Earl of Durham, is the predicament of the remaining British Provinces in America at this moment, and this, it is equally certain, was the predicament of the United States before the Revolution. Abuses without limit or number are the spontaneous product of such a state of things ; and as there will at no time be any want of abundant justificatory causes of revolution on the part of the Colony, so that question of revolution will not be one of right, which is at all times clear, but of expediency merely in the particular conjuncture ; for the colonial condition, I repeat, is incompatible with liberty or good

government, and it is a temporary state, which must and will ever give place in the proper season to other and more fitting institutions.

These are the principles of the American Revolution ; when at length, in the fullness of the accepted hour, sixty three years ago this day, the due time to rear the standard of independence had come, and the representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions, issued, in the name of the good people of the Colonies, the solemn declaration, " That these United Colonies are and of right ought to be, free and independent states ; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved ; and that as free and independent states they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things, which independent states may of right do." To the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, they mutually pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honors ; and generously, at the hazard of life and fortune, did they redeem that pledge in the long and eventful struggle of the War of Independence.

If that war had been the ordinary event of oppressed subjects rising in arms to resist their oppressors, or of a dependent people seeking to become free and independent, still it would have been memorable in the annals of nations :—memorable for the lofty and disinterested patriotism of the men embarked in it ; for the apparent disproportion between the physical strength of the Colonies and that of the Mother Country ; for the union and self-devotion of the people ; and above all, for the purity and good faith which ended the revolution by the organization of the subsisting constitutional confederacy of the people of the United States.

But that war was no such ordinary event of revolution. There was that in the war itself, and in the moral principles heralding its commencement, and consecrated by its conclusion, which rang in the ears of mankind as with the trump of an archangel awaking the quick and the dead to judgment. It proclaimed to all metropolitan governments in Europe whatsoever, that their Colonies in the New World could no longer be held as the convenient means of the selfish aggrandisement of the Mother Country, to be governed or misgoverned at will as the caprice of irresponsible tyranny might dictate. It proclaimed that political equality is the birthright of men and of nations ; that the only just foundation of government is the consent of the governed, and its only legitimate object their common good ; that if not based on moral right, it exists without right ; and that whenever existing government ceases to answer its only end, the promotion of the welfare of the people, they may of right change it, and by force if need be, and remodel it according to their wants and occasions. It gave to Liberty a local habitation, and a visible substance, answering to the



sound ; that Liberty, the fond aspiration of so many sages and heroes of the past, whose names lighten along the dark tracts of the old time, like signal-fires upon a stormy coast, and who perished not in vain so long as their memory remains embalmed for immortality in the admiration of after-ages, to prompt the emulation of their deeds ; that Liberty, which lovely though it were to the mind's eye in the reflected image of antique story, and dear to men's hearts and familiar to their lips in every age and country, yet like the masterpiece of Pygmalion's statuary art, was but a cold inanimate marble, until this new revelation as it were of the eternal truth that all just human government stands upon the consent of the governed, measured and controlled by moral right, breathed the spirit of life through the senseless stone, and animated it into a creature of incarnate beneficence and beauty for the world to bow down and worship. This is the striking and characteristic peculiarity of the American Revolution, which makes it to stand out amid surrounding events in bold relief, like a monumental column on a hill-top, a spectacle and a beacon to the nations alike of the Old World and the New.

But these are the customary and familiar topics of the present occasion ; and I propose to touch upon a larger theme.

The present time is but a point in space ; it is an evanescent point ; whilst you speak of it, it is gone ; if you stretch forth the hand to grasp it, it has already glided away into that past time, which belongs to history ; and you yourself continue to be hurried along towards the illimitable depths of the infinite hereafter. And while the epoch in which we live is one of general activity, our own land is the theatre of peculiar rapidity of progression. Minute, however, and intangible, as is the present moment, it is the point of vision, from which we regard the past and speculate upon the future. Just as in the ordinary prospect, so here, that which immediately surrounds us, we distinguish in its actual magnitude and true shape ; it occupies our perceptions ; it engages our thoughts ; it kindles our passions ; and its interests engross a disproportioned and therefore undue share of our attention and our estimation. That which is far off, on the contrary, is indistinct, and reduced in apparent dimensions by the distance, until it gradually sinks into the horizon ; and as it ceases from the sight, it loses its proper estimate in the mind's eye. Yet in the present lies hid the germ of the future ; and the resolution or act of today draws after it the events of tomorrow, which, obscure as they may be to human sight, are of necessity the more important objects of human care. It is one of the beneficial incidents of occasions like this, the anniversaries of great events in the history of the nation, that we are naturally prompted to pause upon our steps, to arrest, in imagination at least, the career of perpetual progression and change, and to consider well not only that which is, but that which has been, and above all, that which is to be, in the national destinies and condition of the United States.

Fellow citizens, it is not for the idle purpose of self-gratulation, nor in order to awaken emotions of national vanity,—but for a higher object, that I ask you to call to mind the fact, that only half a century has elapsed this year since the first Congress of the United States under the Constitution assembled at New York, and the Revolution was consummated by the organization of the Federal Union. There are single reigns of European princes much exceeding that period in length. It is far short of the allotted duration of human life. There are still living, those who witnessed the first inauguration of the President of the United States. Nay, there still survive among us not a few gray headed veterans of the War of Independence,—and long may they continue to wear the laurels they have gloriously earned, and to enjoy the grateful respect of us whose liberty and prosperity their blood purchased,—venerable men, who in the ardor of their youthful courage and patriotism, mustered to man the heights of Bunker's Hill at the hour of their country's need, whose undaunted spirit quailed not in the disasters of the retreat through the Jerseys or the sufferings of Valley Forge, and whose gallantry gained them illustrious recompense in the triumphs of Saratoga and of Yorktown, and who yet remain to a green old age, the living monuments of those days of trial and of glory, which distinguished the era of the Revolution. Nay more.—It is but a brief period,—brief in the comparative history of nations,—since the banks of the beautiful Connecticut, which now flows beneath our eyes amid smiling plenty, and all the grateful signs of civilization, peace, and moral and material cultivation, were the haunt of wandering barbarians, or of wild beasts scarce more savage than the men who hunted them for food; but a brief period, since the little companies of Englishmen landing at Jamestown, at Plymouth, and at Salem, planted in the wilderness the humble beginnings of the great parent Colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts.

What a contrast is presented to us in the existing population, resources, productions, strength, and prospects of the United States! We, the handful of settlers at Jamestown and Salem,—we, the half peopled Colonies who were compelled to struggle hard for independence against the then fearful odds of the power of Great Britain,—we have grown to be a mighty nation, the equal in just pretensions, the competitor in wealth and commerce, and the rival in physical strength, of the proudest among the kingdoms of Europe. Not only have we grown to this astonishing height with equally astonishing rapidity, but we have outstripped our own perceptions of the fact. We ourselves are not fully sensible of the strength and vigor of the young giant's limbs. I saw continual proof of this in the groundless fears, which not long since prevailed, in certain quarters at least, that England would take umbrage, and rush into war with us, when we told her, in the only language befitting the occasion, that the time for aggression on the United States was gone by, and that as we had taken

up arms once to obtain independence, and again to vindicate the liberty of the seas, we should not shrink from doing it a third time, if need were, to maintain the inviolability of our native land. They, I say, who apprehended that Great Britain would, for the hope of acquiring a few additional square miles of territory in America, press the United States to the issue of war, undervalued the absolute strength of their country and the patriotism of their countrymen; they did not realize the greatness of our power; they failed to perceive that the only probable conclusion of a new struggle between us and Great Britain, provoked by new aggressions on her part, must and would be the total extinction of the last remnant of European authority in North America. For the Anglo-American race has now attained that pitch of elevation, which renders it certain that, whatever other political communities there may be on the Continent, whether they be dependent or independent states,—submissive vassals of foreign masters, or the self-governed masters of their native land,—whatever *they* may be, the United States are, and will be in moral influence and in material force, the leading Power of the New World.

Much has been addressed continually to popular audiences, on occasions like this, concerning the political principles of the Revolution and of the Constitution. I propose rather, in continuance of the present train of reflection, to exhibit the territorial progress and physical force of the United States in their relation to the moral and political character of our institutions and people, as acting upon and acted upon by each other, and coöperating in the development of the material resources of North America. For this, though less discussed than the other, is a more practical question, of permanent importance, and perpetually recurring upon us in every contingency of public affairs; and therefore one which it is desirable should be thoroughly and universally understood.

You know, that, at the conclusion of the War of Independence, the nominal limits of the United States were the British Provinces as now on the north, the Mississippi on the west, and Louisiana and Florida on the south west and south. But the practical limits were much less. Stretched along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean were the thirteen original United States, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, which by the Treaty of Peace the king of Great Britain acknowledges to be free, sovereign, and independent states; that he treats with them as such, and relinquishes all claims to the government, property, and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof. Massachusetts, her actual limits reaching only a hundred miles inland from the sea, and Virginia, scarcely settled farther, were then foremost among the States in wealth and population. New York, her rich interior yet unoccupied, was very far short of her present empire dimensions. Pennsylvania was but just proceeding to occupy the slope of the Alleghanies. The hardy



pioneers of Kentucky and Tennessee, offshoots of Virginia and North Carolina, had scarcely begun to cross the mountains, and to acquire in the long struggle with the savages around them, the qualities of courage, hardihood, gallantry, and spirit, which they have transmitted to their sons. Vermont, though not yet recognized as a separate State, had by the patriotism of her children secured the right to be so considered, and as such admitted in due time into the Union. Maine, known only as a portion of Massachusetts, was in the chief part of it an untrodden wilderness. Thus, over a space of fifteen hundred miles along the Atlantic Ocean were the then United States scattered, covering in comparison with the vast interior of the Continent, only as it were a riband of sea beach, with a sparse population amounting to but about a third part of that of the Union at the present time. Add to which that in several of the middle and southern States were numerous tribes of Indians, most of them stimulated into hostility against us by the iniquitous policy of Great Britain, and thus constituting a body of internal and frontier enemies, who pressed back the population, and prevented or checked the full cultivation and settlement of those States.

Restricted and embarrassed at the conclusion of Peace as the United States were, territorially speaking, their material condition in other respects was still less auspicious of their present greatness. As yet, none of the States had prosecuted the cultivation of cotton, which now constitutes our greatest staple of exchangeable production for the purchase of foreign commodities; nor indeed was the demand for this article in Europe such as to render it an object of extensive and profitable culture. Our commerce labored under a multitude of impediments, foreign and domestic. Preëminent among the latter, in addition to the absence of most of the present mass of exportable products, was the political condition of the country under the old Confederation, so imperfect in its organization, so impracticable in operation, as neither to give us respect and confidence abroad, nor consistency and stability at home. The field of our commercial enterprise was chiefly confined to Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands; but though at peace with all these nations, we were still involved in serious controversies with several of them; their selfish policy of metropolitan monopoly nearly shut out our ships from the commerce of their Colonies; the Baltic was yet scarce explored by us; the Mediterranean, and the many rich countries which occupy its shores, were almost sealed against us by the piracies of the Barbary States; and our merchants were yet unknown to the immense population of the Asiatic world. Britain, France, and Spain, jealous of our capacity for greatness, and with good cause fearful of the influence of those principles of democratic right which our Revolution proclaimed, were little disposed to do justice to our national pretensions. Great Britain, especially, soured by the humiliations she had undergone in the War of

Independence, and not unhopèful that in the chapter of chances the Union might fall in pieces of itself, and she regain a part at least of her lost possessions, continued, in violation of the Treaty of Peace, to maintain garrisons in some of the most important points of our western territory, and kept alive the animosity of the Indians against us by counsel, presents, and subsidies, as indeed she has persisted in doing to the present day. Hemmed in by European Colonies on the north, the west, and the south, we saw closed against us the mouth of the Mississippi, the sole outlet of the commerce of the West. Of manufactures, we possessed comparatively none, except in the form of the most ordinary handicraft and household productions; for the Confederation had no power to give either to our commerce or our manufactures that national protection, without which the one must languish, and the other could not begin to exist. Each of the States, and especially the most patriotic among them, staggered under the burden of the enormous debts, public and private, incurred by the protracted War of Independence. In a word, the United States, while possessed of all the moral and material elements of greatness, were feeble, inert, almost powerless, by reason of those great obstacles to the development of their strength, which seemed likely to doom them to such a sickly existence of poverty and anarchy as we have since seen exemplified in the republics of Spanish America.

But the patriots of the Revolution were thoughtful, wise, and farseeing men. They discerned the evil, and they discerned the remedy. Not for this poor consummation, not to see their beloved country impoverished and distracted at home, or depressed and trodden upon abroad, had they fought the battles of the Revolution. They had achieved independence. In securing the recognition of this, they had verified the abstract principles of the Declaration of Independence with which they started; they had established the eternal truth, or rather, as Franklin did not create but drew down the lightning from Heaven, they had made that eternal truth their own, and had fixed it on earth by human act and institution,—the truth of the natural right of man to self-government, under moral responsibility always to the Supreme Arbiter of the universe. It remained for them to render the people of the thirteen United States one people, to impart nationality to them, and to give to them suitable institutions of government, sheltered and guarded by which the industrial energies of the people might be called into full play, and the United States enter upon the fulfillment of the great destiny marked out for them by nature and by circumstances, of peopling and cultivating the Continent of North America. This they accomplished by the organization of the present government, when the people of the United States, for the purposes so clearly though succinctly set forth in the instrument itself, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the bless-



ings of liberty to themselves and their posterity, did ordain and establish the Constitution of the United States.

Then was perceived what mighty things a free people, with well-devised political institutions, and adequate natural advantages, may do. For, all these things the people of the United States now had. Long ago it was said of the Athenians, that, controlled by one man, they exerted themselves feebly, because exertion was for a master; regaining liberty, each man was made zealous, because his zeal was for himself, and his individual interest was the common weal. And so it was with the people of the United States. By the force of their own right arms, and the help of Almighty God, they were free. In the constitution and laws of the several States, they possessed abundant guarantees for the assurance of the freedom they had conquered. The Federal Union gave to them unity as a nation, so far as regards all questions of exterior relation, and of their necessary relations among themselves, either as one people, or as the separate peoples of so many confederated sovereign States. Thus they had resolved the problem of giving to small republics the exterior strength and capacity of power hitherto enjoyed only by great empires; and of giving to a great empire the interior development and local and personal freedom proper to small republics. The vast Continent of North America was before them where to choose, for the expansion of their population. And they had those qualities of mind and character, that moral vigor, that bold and hardy enterprise, that unconfined and unconquerable impulse of a free spirit conscious of its own inborn energies and rights, which neither the hostility of Britain, nor the intrigues of France and Spain, nor any earthly power, could hinder from the brilliant career preordained for us by eternal Providence.

Accordingly, the population of the United States, which in 1790 was but four millions, is now sixteen or seventeen millions. The revolutionary debt of near eighty millions of dollars has been wholly discharged without any sensible inconvenience to the people, and that in the face of a maritime war with France, a general war with England, conflicts with the Barbary States, many Indian wars, and the perpetual progress of most expensive establishments of education, commerce and internal communication; while in the same period the war debts of other nations have been devouring their private substance and crippling their public energies. The annual current revenues of the United States have in the same period increased from five millions to twenty five; our commercial tonnage from half a million to two millions; our annual foreign exports from twenty millions of dollars, to one hundred and forty millions; and our trading ships, then chiefly confined in their range to a portion of Europe and the West Indies, now dispute with those of Great Britain the palm of maritime ascendency in every quarter of the globe. Nor has our national growth in territory been less remarkable; for, straightened no longer in the

narrow strip between the Alleghanies and the Atlantic Ocean; our population has swarmed into the valley of the Mississippi, occupied the region of the lakes, possessed itself of Louisiana and Florida, and is now looking beyond the Rocky Mountains to the shores of the great Pacific Sea; and every where it has carried with it the laws, the institutions, the religion, the combined love of order and love of freedom, the industrial energy and activity, and the monuments of art, knowledge, and commerce, and the general civilization, which our European forefathers brought hither with them, and which, wherever their children are found, testify to the blood and the principles of the original colonists of the United States.

Doubtless, the custom of grossly exaggerating the natural advantages of one's own country is to be deprecated, as in bad taste, to say the least of it. Still it is fastidious, and the result of a superficial view of things, to complain of men for being rationally proud of their father land. National pride, so long as it does not degenerate into a blind prejudice against public improvement, is a just, a laudable, a useful pride. It is intimately associated with all that is most noble in the aspirations of a people after excellence, and in devotion to their country's honor and welfare. Who, among the nations of the old world, were more proud of their native land than the Greeks? Who among the Greeks than the Athenians? Who rated themselves by a more exalted standard, or in their language, writings, and acts more confidently arrogated the intellectual, as by their arms and policy they attained the territorial, empire of the earth, than the Romans? And yet these were the men, to whom belonged successively the mastery of their times. And their example proved, what indeed all history confirms, that a confidence in our powers, a conviction of our superiority, and a high trust in our destinies, are indispensably requisite to the attainment of extraordinary greatness as a nation. A people, emulous of prosperity, should resolve, not to magnify into a prodigy every peculiar trait of condition or character belonging to them, but to feel the most hearty assurance of their own national capabilities, in order to effect the full development of their particular elements of political exaltation. Place a people, therefore, in the necessity of struggling against natural difficulties, provided those difficulties be superable; give to them the personal qualities adapted to their situation, with a due admixture of the sentiment of national pride and love of country to stimulate and sustain their efforts; and greatness comes to them in the inevitable course of events, as naturally and certainly as the harvest follows the seed time.

In the material progress of the United States, the operation of these causes is manifest; and the territorial progression of the country has been marked by stages, each of them peculiar, and all objects of interest and importance.

When, at the close of the fifteenth century, the Cabots had,

in the service of the King of England, sailed along the Atlantic coast of North America, that prince claimed the right of jurisdiction and sovereignty over the country by the title of discovery. But the English were at that time and long after profoundly ignorant of the extent and geographical divisions of the interior of the Continent. As the various chartered companies proceeded to establish colonies here, they obtained charters, granting to them the property and dominion of enormous tracts of land, equal in size to the kingdoms of the Old World, but defined with the looseness and inaccuracy of mere conjecture. Thus the Colony of Massachusetts had in the outset a grant of all the lands extending north and south from three miles north of the Merrimac to three miles south of Charles river; and "in length and longitude, of and within all the breadth aforesaid, throughout the main lands there, from the Atlantic and Western Sea and Ocean on the east part to the South Sea on the west part;" and when from time to time Plymouth, Maine and other territories were annexed to Massachusetts, the same extent from sea to sea was continued to the original Colony. A similar grant was made to Connecticut. The English government, it is manifest could never have intended to found Colonies of such an impracticable form as those grants in fact make, a narrow belt running inland from one side of the globe to the other like the space between two parallels of latitude. To Virginia was given a grant yet more absurd, and in terms impossible indeed, it being described as of that "part of America called Virginia, from the point of land called Cape or Point Comfort all along the sea coast to the southward two hundred miles; and all the space and circuit of land lying from the sea coast of the precincts aforesaid up into the land throughout from sea to sea west and north west." A glance at the map will show to you the geographical nonsense of this description. Accordingly, the Government, without respecting the indefinite extent, west and south west, of these grants, proceeded to establish Colonies, such as Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania, which ran up, not without something of the same indefiniteness, behind and within the others; so that several of the Colonies, according to the terms of the original charters, lapped over each other, and had conflicting and incompatible pretensions towards the interior of the Continent.

Meanwhile, another power, France, availing itself of the slowness and supineness of England in this matter, had planted its standard on the St. Lawrence and the Lakes, and thence along in the valley of the Mississippi, spanning around the English Colonies with a cordon of posts in their rear from the extreme northeast to the extreme southwest; so that although England and the English Colonies succeeded in breaking off one end of this chain by the conquest of Canada, yet the Mississippi remained, at the time of the Revolution, and by the terms of the Treaty of Peace, the western limit of the United States.



This treaty recognizes, in the first place, all the territorial rights of the thirteen United States and each by name, and every part thereof. All the claims of separate jurisdiction and sovereignty appertaining to either of the States were in this way secured to them respectively. The treaty then proceeds to say: "And that all dispute which might arise in future, on the subject of the boundaries of the said United States may be prevented, it is hereby agreed and declared, that the following are and shall be their boundaries;" and then comes a description, not of the separate boundaries of each State, but of the general boundaries of the whole United States.

Understanding these preliminary facts, we shall be prepared to consider the gravest and most difficult of all the public questions, which occupied the country in the interval between the conclusion of the war, and the formation of the Federal Constitution. What disposition should be made of the immense public domain lying untenanted within the boundaries marked out by the Treaty of Peace? To whom did it belong,—to the United States in the aggregate, or to the separate States? There was indeed little comparative difficulty in assigning a *de facto* western limit to most of the Colonies, by the collation of their several grants, and of definitive orders or proclamations, issued by the English government and acquiesced in by the Colonies concerned. Thus, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, would extend due west to the Mississippi, South Carolina being cut short between the two latter; a part of the northwestern claims of Virginia would be concluded by the position of Maryland and Pennsylvania, and of the western claims of Connecticut and Massachusetts, by the interposition of New York. By recognizing these limits, most of the thirteen States came into possession of a vast public domain as their own separate property; consisting of the crown, charter, and proprietary lands within their immediate bounds; as was very signally the case with New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. Some of these States have husbanded their public lands, retaining more or less at the present time; others disposed of them, whether providently or not is immaterial, since it was at any rate according to their own views of their own interest. In some instances, the separate domain of a State would be such as to indicate the necessity or expediency of erecting a new State out of it; and thus, in the progress of time, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Maine were organized and received into the Union. One State, it is to be remembered, Vermont, established itself in the course of the Revolution, by the spontaneous act of its inhabitants, repudiating as well the authority of the Crown, as the claim of jurisdiction over them asserted by New Hampshire and New York.

But, these points being contingently settled, the grave question still remained, to whom belonged the immense region north

and west of the Ohio? What disposition should be made of this region, then overrun by Indians? And of the western part of Georgia, also occupied by populous tribes of Indians, and lying between hostile foreign Colonies? Massachusetts and Connecticut, for instance, claimed that the express terms of their respective charters should be satisfied. Virginia claimed the whole North West, by virtue of the word 'northwest' in her charter. Others of the States resisted these extravagant pretensions; urged that such grants would be held void for uncertainty in any court; that the charters themselves had been cancelled; that the western and northwestern limits of the Colonies claimant had been again and again defined and settled by recognized acts of the Crown; that those Colonies ought to be content with the vast public domain within their admitted limits; and that the lands in the North West, having been conquered from Britain by the common blood and treasure of all the States, should be reserved and sold for the joint benefit of all. At length, the spirit of concession and compromise appropriate to their condition, and the sentiment of overruling patriotism by which the great men of that day were characterized, prevailed against all sordid motives or narrow considerations, and Virginia, and the other States claimant, relinquished, with some minor reservations, all their claims to the territory northwest of the Ohio, which now became the undisputed property of the United States.

The disposition of this territory, its preparation for settlers, and the government to be given to them, were the next important object of consideration; and this point was controlled by two predominant ideas, one of them emanating from Virginia, the other from Massachusetts, which were incorporated into the very being of the territory, by successive ordinances of Congress.

Of these two ideas, the Virginia idea, originally proposed in Congress by Mr. Jefferson in 1784, and though not then adopted, yet finally sanctioned in 1787 by the great fundamental ordinance of the North West, was, that, in addition to republican government, which was a thing of course, the territory should enjoy the benefit of the unadulterated and unimpaired principles of the Declaration of Independence, and therefore involuntary servitude should be forever excluded from it. This provision of the ordinance in fact abolished the institution of slavery then existing within the territory. It dedicated the territory to unmixed liberty forever. It rendered liberty the very tenure by which the lands in the territory were to be held and occupied. I remember having seen with particular interest in the Castle of Windsor a group of small white banners, deposited there by the Duke of Wellington; the rich lands of Strathfieldsaye having been presented to him by Parliament in recompense and honor of his public achievements, on condition of annual service to the Crown by presentation of a knight's banner. It seemed to me a most appropriate and beautiful idea, that the victor of

Hindu Assaye, of Ciudad Rodrigo, Vittoria and Waterloo, should hold his lands by the very emblem and tenure as it were of victory. It is in like manner the condition of the settlement of the North West, that the settlers shall hold it by the tenure of perpetual liberty. I rejoice to be able to present this to you as an idea proceeding from Virginia ; for that great Commonwealth did not then, as I trust it does not now, profess to belie the doctrines of the Revolution by considering slavery any thing else but a curse and a blot on our institutions ; nor had she then so refined away the functions of government by metaphysical subtleties, as to maintain, which she now does, that her Legislature has not power to abolish slavery within her own limits. There stands the ordinance of the North West, to admonish her of the true principles of her own constitutional power and of eternal right.

The other was a Massachusetts idea. Every land-holder in Massachusetts derives his title, either directly or indirectly, from the Colony, Province, or Commonwealth. There is not an acre of land in the State, the fee of which does not come from its government. In the old time, whenever individuals made suitable application to the General Court, a tract of land for a township was granted to them ; and they became organized at once into three corporations, namely, the township, or municipal body ; the proprietors ; and the parish. At first, these bodies were all identical ; but at length they became in general separate ; though cases still exist of the continued identity of two of these bodies, and it may possibly be of all. From the body of proprietors each individual received his share, subject always to the sovereign rights of the Commonwealth. Those old proprietors, the men of the Colony of Massachusetts, were actuated by peculiar inducements. They did not come hither, as military invaders in pursuit of conquests, like the Spaniards. Nor were they mercantile or agricultural speculators, like many of the settlers in other parts of the country. Their object was a purely intellectual one, a sentiment, an idea, a principle. They were enthusiasts, bigoted if you please, but still highminded ones, engaged in a great and generous political experiment. Their object was the combination of civil freedom with intellectual and moral instruction and religious truth. They rid themselves of the burden of feudal tenures. They established municipal institutions and free representative assemblies of legislation. They made partition of inheritances among all their children. On board the *May Flower* the pilgrims of Plymouth had entered into a compact for their future government on shore, and thus gave the first example of a written political constitution. They in fact began the propagation of those principles, which led to the independence of the United States, and the formation of the Union. But they were men, also, who knew and estimated the value of intellectual, moral, and religious instruction, and who believed that, without this, liberty would soon degenerate into licentiousness, and pass first into anarchy and then to despotism. Accordingly, they founded



colleges, and provided schools and churches, and made the universal instruction of all classes of the community one of the obligations of government. Mindful of these great objects, in all their grants of land, the General Court reserved in each township one lot for schools, one for the parish, and one for the first settled minister of the Gospel; and this became universal; and after the adoption of the State government the practice of reservations for education and religion, and for roads also, was systematized by a standing law; and such was from the beginning and is now the internal policy of Massachusetts.

Well, in the course of God's providence, the subject Colonies were become an independent nation, with a vast interior domain, the property of the United States. Massachusetts was a member of that Union, having a voice,—shall I not say, a leading voice?—in its councils. What did she do? She proposed and she effected the dedication of one thirty sixth part of the soil of the North-West to the purpose of educating its future inhabitants; and this, with perpetual freedom, and other incidents of republican institutions, became the fundamental law of the territory. And I have looked upon the late attempts in Congress to disturb this arrangement, under pretext of making compensation to the Old States for the lands set apart for education in the New, as little better than sacrilege, and as the violation of a compact not less binding than the Constitution itself. But however this may be, certain it is, that, consequently upon the wise measures adopted by the Congress of the Confederation, that which in 1789 was a howling wilderness, now contains the great States and Territories of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, with a population but little short of that of the whole United States at the time of the Revolution.

This was the first grand step in the augmentation of the power of the United States. Next followed the conclusion of a long adjourned question with the State of Georgia, by which, in 1802, for adequate consideration, the latter ceded to the United States the territory now comprised in the States of Alabama and Mississippi. And thus had the United States, by extending its settlements to the left bank of the Mississippi, and by organizing either State or Territorial governments in all the region between the Alleghenies and that river, rendered the control of its navigation necessary to our peace and prosperity, and prepared the way for the acquisition of Louisiana. Hitherto, the population of the United States had been confined to the limits fixed by the Treaty of Peace; but events were now in train, which extended the Republic from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

At that time, Florida and Louisiana, after being for a while held, the former by England and the latter by Spain, were now restored to their original masters, Florida to Spain, and Louisiana to France. While Spain was in possession of both Florida and

Louisiana, she had, as I have before stated, endeavored to shackle the growing strength of the Union, by excluding our settlements in the West from their natural and indispensable access to the sea; she had intrigued with them to produce a dismemberment of the Republic; she exerted, or enabled others to exert, a most unfriendly influence over the Indians within our acknowledged limits; and thus held in check the whole of the South and West, as Great Britain now does the whole of the North and East, through her possessions on the St. Lawrence. By treaty with France in 1803, we obtained the cession of Louisiana, and became the sole master of the magnificent Valley of the Mississippi, the most unique territory on the face of the globe: and from Spain, in 1819, we obtained the two Floridas, and an unequivocal title to the important region between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Each of these events was associated with analogous considerations of constitutional right and political expediency, which were fully discussed and settled, on occasion of the purchase of Louisiana, and require a passing notice in this connection.

On the one hand, with all the ardor of honest zeal, and the force of legal ingenuity, it was denied that under the Constitution the Federal Government had any power to acquire new territory; it was contended, that, although, by express terms, "New States may be admitted, by the Congress, into this Union," yet the clause intended States formed from the existing territory, and excluded any from without; that this acquisition would be only the first step in a series of acquisitions, dangerous to the tranquillity, and fatal to the interests, of the original States; and that by it the Constitution was overthrown, the several States absolved from the moral obligations of the contract, and it had become the right of all, and the duty of some of the States, to prepare for the inevitable event of the dissolution of the Union.

On the other hand, it was replied with like zeal and force, that the Constitution expressly authorized the Government to hold territory; that such territory could be acquired either under the indefinite scope of the war power, or the treaty power; that Louisiana having been acquired by treaty, that treaty, as the supreme law of the land, made the territory an integral part of the Union; that the power of Congress to admit new States was indefinite, without any negation in terms of territory without the Union; that in point of historical fact that clause was purposely so worded in order to admit the Canadas into the Union, if circumstances should render this just and proper in itself; that the admission of Louisiana would be of the greatest possible benefit to the Atlantic States, by affording a market for their fish, manufactures, and other merchandizes, and business for their shipping, and by the general augmentation of the industrial resources of the country; that it was of vital consequence to the Western States; that if it augmented the political weight of the South, it augmented the



material strength and industrial prosperity of the North ; that it was advantageous therefore, in one way or another, to every one of the Old States ; that instead of justifying, or tending to promote, the dissolution of the Union, the annexation of it, and this alone, would prevent the speedy dismemberment of the Union, by removing the temptation and almost the necessity of the States in the Valley of the Mississippi to unite with Louisiana in forming a separate republic ; and that if any doubt remained with regard to the constitutional power, the immeasurable importance of the measure should come in aid of the doubt, and settle it in favor of the power to receive Louisiana into the Union.

Happily for the peace, honor, and prosperity of the United States, these considerations prevailed. Whatever doubts then existed of the constitutional power of the government to acquire territory from without the limits of the Union as it stood at the time of its formation, that question was settled by the admission of Louisiana ; and the precedent was followed, with no serious controversy, on occasion of the cession of Florida ; and now that one half of the actual extent of the United States consists of territory so acquired, the point is placed beyond all reasonable debate. To the Southern States, the effect of these acquisitions has been to give them a maritime frontier on the Gulf of Mexico ; to shut out all foreign influences from the interior of that part of the country ; and to open to them a new field of industrial enterprise. To the West, it has been the creation of that splendid domain thronged with prosperous freemen, who cover the Father of Waters, and his thousand tributary streams, with floating palaces, weighed down by the rich productions of that unequalled Valley. For the East, need I ask you where is now the great market for our manufactories and our fisheries, where the chief resource of our coasting trade and our freighting ships, where the heritage of our sons, when our growing population crowds upon ourselves,—where, but in the fertile regions of the Valley of the Mississippi ? And deeply were they mistaken, who prophesied that the acquisition of Louisiana was to weaken the bands of the Union. On the contrary, I do most fully believe,—nay, I know, that the effect has been the reverse. We can look back at this time on the ill-omened predictions of that day, and see their evident fallacy. So long as a foreign Power held the western bank of the Mississippi, through its whole length, and its mouth on both sides, there was, and there could be, neither peace, prosperity, nor contentment among the people of the Western States. Their geographical position knit them more closely to each other, and to the Mississippi, than to the States on the Atlantic. To prevent the annexation of Louisiana to the Union would have been to prompt and impel those States to seize it by force themselves, and, if that were the alternative, to build up a separate empire of their own in the heart of the Continent. And as things now are, the Mississippi is the bond of union to all the States ; it is the silver cord on which

the otherwise separate pearls of the Union are strung and held together. Take an example. Massachusetts and South Carolina are insulated from each other; New York and North Carolina are insulated from each other; they have no point of actual contact; they have no geographical connection by rivers or otherwise. But North Carolina crosses the Alleghanies, and thus associates itself geographically with the West; so does New York; and thus New York and North Carolina have a common point of association. But Massachusetts and South Carolina neither touch one another, nor do they reach into the Valley of the Mississippi; but they are geographically connected, the one with New York and the other with North Carolina, and thus the round of association is completed. Without particularizing other individual States, it may be stated as the general fact, that while the States of the extreme East and the extreme South are held together, not by mutual contact, but by contact with the great States of the centre, so the States of the Mississippi are a tie of union to the latter, and through them to the entire mass of the United States.

To this exhibition of the progress of the material growth of the United States, there is one other fact of the same class to be subjoined, which is, the gradual removal, chiefly since the year 1829, of most of the Indian tribes from the east to the west side of the Mississippi. Without pausing to speak of the specific merits of a measure so generally condemned, as to its time and manner at least, by the people of Massachusetts, I remark only, with regard to its political effects,—first, that its operation upon the States from which the Indians have been removed has been precisely the same as the acquisition of new territory; secondly, that this operation has benefited both slaveholding and non-slaveholding States, the acquisitions in the North West corresponding to those in the South West; thirdly, that, if,—which has been said, though I know no evidence of the fact,—if there is any reason to believe one of the original inducements of this measure to have been the anticipated advancement of the slave interest,—if any such calculation was made, the result has defeated it, both on this side of the Mississippi, and still more on the other, inasmuch as, of the lands ceded to the United States by the Indians since 1829, there lie 81,530,297 acres within the free States or Territories, and only 28,320,160 acres within the slave-holding States or Territories; and inasmuch as the removed Indians are mostly collected south of the line of the Missouri compromise, leaving the rich and capacious territory of Iowa open to the growth of freedom,—while in addition to Missouri and Arkansas, no new slaveholding States can well be constructed in the limits of the old Colony of Louisiana.

Fellow citizens, I have placed before you the picture of the past progress of the United States. I have said nothing of the foreign wars or of the domestic dissensions upon questions of temporary public policy, which have from time to time agitated the country, because the sources of its prosperity lie too

deep to have been greatly impeded or greatly accelerated in their action, by such superficial causes. You see how in the short space of fifty years the territorial surface of the Union has been doubled, how its inhabitants have increased four fold, and its productive resources seven fold; and how the number of the confederate Republics has been augmented from thirteen to twenty-six, or rather twenty nine I may say, including three populous Territories, which must very soon be ranked as States. Shall I proceed? Shall I venture on the bold undertaking to lift the veil which covers the unseen future, and to speculate concerning that which the United States are to become? Something of this we may safely attempt, so far at least as we have sure facts on which to proceed.

Cast your eyes for a moment on the map of North America. Extending inward through the broadest part of the Continent, you see a chain of great lakes on the line where the land and the streams slope off, on the one hand towards the inhospitable and scarce habitable regions of the Arctic Sea, and on the other towards the Gulf of Mexico. Begin at the southerly part of the latter division, occupying the temperate zone entirely, and you perceive a chain of mountains on the right hand, which proceeds northwardly along the Atlantic and but a short way from it; and another chain of mountains, which in a similar manner pursues the shores of the Pacific; thus dividing the space from ocean to ocean into three grand divisions; one, a narrow slope, a sort of extended sea shore, between the Atlantic and the Alleghanies; another narrow slope between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific; and a spacious region, greatly larger than both the others united, bounded east and west by the two chains of mountains. Upon the narrowest of those ocean-slopes, the least fertile, that which has the more unfriendly climate, and in general the fewest natural resources, are the thirteen old United States situated, with the bulk of the present population of the Union, cultivating those arts of life to which the domestic consumption of the country, but above all the ready access to Europe, invites us. Adjoining the Pacific, the broader of the two slopes, the more productive, the milder in climate, that which by its ready access to the enormous multitudes of Asiatic population has the greater commercial resources, is, by reason of gross and monstrous neglect of successive administrations of the Federal Government, not even tenanted in its vast extent by so much as a single American post where the stripes and stars may give sign of our presence and attest our right of possession, until our supineness has raised up an adverse claimant on the part of Great Britain, who is ready enough at all times to lay her grasping hand upon every spot on the face of the globe which by fraud or force she can wrest from its true proprietors. Of the intermediate space, forming a single valley of vast extent, with the Mississippi, or rather the Missouri flowing in its bottom,



having fifty seven large tributary rivers, some of them traversing from one to two thousand miles before they reach the main trunk,—the very field of all others for the wonders of the steam engine to operate in, overcoming space, and removing all objections arising from the direction of currents or the remoteness of parts,—of this valley it has been said by the most intelligent of all foreign observers, that “it is, upon the whole, the most magnificent dwelling-place prepared by God for the abode of man;” and it was said with precision and truth; for there is upon earth no other region combining in the same degree the qualities of magnitude, unity, salubriousness of climate, fertility of soil, mineral resources, and facility of interior intercourse. Such are the remarkable geographical features of the United States; the basin of the Mississippi being the main body, and the mountain slopes on the Atlantic and the Pacific being the flanks, whose maritime position protects the whole from foreign assault, and at the same time associates the whole with Europe on the one hand, and Asia on the other; constituting the congenial parts of a most extensive, but at the same time, most compact, natural territory for the reception of a great confederation of States.

We have inspected the country; let us now inspect the people to whom it belongs. That people consists chiefly of different branches of the Teutonic race, as Dutch, German, Swedish, Saxon and Norman, the combination of the latter predominating over all others. Individually, they possess the hardihood, resolution, perseverance, industry, enterprise, activity, love of liberty, steady energy, and deep enthusiasm of character, which in various proportions appertain to those primitive stocks. Their local institutions are thoroughly democratic; and thus aid in the development of that individualization of power and of effort, which is the great secret of personal liberty. In a word, they are the very men, best fitted by their personal character and political institutions to penetrate the primeval forest, to reclaim the wilderness, to cover the waste with smiling fields, to found cities, to navigate the rivers and the seas, to flinch before none of the obstacles which nature and fortune throw in their way, and by their steadily rapid progression to give to the New World the blessings of civilization and christianity. This is their vocation; this their destiny. And the time is near at hand,—near in the life of a nation,—not unattainable in the life of a man,—when the United States will possess more than a hundred million inhabitants, nearly all speaking the same language,—having one general civilization, literature, and national character,—similar laws and religion. Thus much I hold to be certain. It is not conjecture. It is not prediction. It is inference simply, from known facts and sure premises, like that, by which we judge that the same bright sun, which rose in the east to-day, will continue to-morrow to run his glorious career on high. And this the certain fact, of such an identical population, so large,

and of such character, placed in such natural advantages, will be an event unparalleled in the history of human race, and big with consequences which baffle conjecture, and defy calculation.

But some one stands ready to object.—There may be foreign wars, there may be Indian wars, there may be mal-administration of the public affairs, there may be civil wars, there may come a dissolution of the Union. True, all these things are possible, some of them probable, nay, certain to happen.—How then, it will be demanded, can I speak with so much confidence of the anticipated future greatness of the United States? I reply, that none of these things are adequate to prevent the predestined result.—There will be as there have been, men of influence in public affairs, rash, passionate, unfit for civil rule, who may sacrifice the welfare of years, to the passion of an hour; there will be others, who look only to the ascendancy of a party, regardless of the good of the country; others, who sell themselves to some overbearing sectional interest or predominant faction, and maintain by suppleness that hold of political life which they could never secure by the lofty qualities of a true statesman. But we have seen experiments enough of the operation of this fact to show, that the people of the United States possess recuperative energies, in their elastic habits of mind and character, in the freedom of their institutions, in the vast resources of the country, and in the separate rights and domestic policy of each State, to rise superior to all the blunders or misdeeds of the Federal Government.—Foreign wars, even the most desperate and protracted, can never bear so heavily on the whole Union at once, as to affect permanently its general growth. If invaded by a foreign enemy, that invasion acts directly on the frontiers of the country; the great interior retains all the substance of peace, and the means of keeping up the supply of men, arms, and provisions for the parts attacked; if one portion of the country suffers, the rest is exempt, or may even derive enhanced prosperity from the events and consequences of the war. There are but two great nations which touch us by land; and each of them has more to fear from us than we from them.—Indian wars have been and always will be comparatively confined to some one region, and however disastrous there, yet incapable of acting on the nation at large.—Civil war, either with or without a disruption of the Union, would be a more heavy calamity; but in that event our situation would at worst be analogous to that of Europe, most of the various nations of which are collected together in a less space than the surface of the United States; and all the protracted wars of Europe, even the sanguinary struggle of the French Revolution, even the general invasion and ravage of the whole Roman Empire by the northern Barbarians, though they retarded, and sometimes threw back, the advancement of population and civilization in Europe, yet did not wholly prevent it; and the identity of our language, the ties of blood and commercial association, the nature of our institutions,

and the diversity of our resources, afford us many guaranties against the occurrence of any internal wars so general and so destructive as those which have afflicted the different states of Europe.

For the people of the United States, it is a most auspicious circumstance, that our progression is not accomplished by force of arms. Our advancement is a peaceful one, the inevitable result of natural circumstances. For I do not regard occasional contests with the Indians as contradictory of this position. Their gradual extinction, like our gradual expansion, is chiefly to be ascribed to the personal qualities of each race; to our industry, enterprise, civilization, and social institutions, on the one hand; and to their want of these, and their untameable savagery, on the other hand, which dooms them to self-destruction. Our progression, therefore, is on the whole an eminently peaceful one. There are two European nations, and only two, which like us, have within the same half century greatly advanced in power; and their condition illustrates by contrast our own. Since the close of the War of Independence, Great Britain has added more than fifty, perhaps seventy millions of subjects to her dominion. But they are foreign nations, alien to her in religion, laws, language, and feeling,—reduced into servitude by wanton invasion,—situated at the other extremity of the globe,—scattered over Asia, Africa, and the South Sea islands,—attached to her by no ties of affection or interest,—prompt at the first inviting occasion to rise in arms against a hateful oppressor,—overgrown and unwieldy masses of remote possessions, held to her only by a thread as it were, which must and will snap off, the moment that her maritime ascendancy is shaken, or that civil convulsions call for her forces at home, or that Russia gets ready to strike the long meditated blow. During the same period, Russia has been the only other permanently progressive European Power. Her advancement has been analogous to that of the United States in this, that it has proceeded by gradual and sure acquisitions in regions of country adjoining to the original source of empire; but they have been acquisitions by conquest; the military operations of a great military state like Rome, while England is the parallel of ancient Carthage. While the empire of Russia is a more stable one, therefore, than that of England, and more likely to endure, it needs no exhibition of details to demonstrate the superior advantages and better future chances of the people of the United States.

I do not say *the United States*, but the *people* of the United States, because the Anglo-American people is certain to overspread this Continent, though in the progress of that great work new combinations of government may be destined to take the place of the present Federal Union. But I consider this the less probable alternative. It seems to have been the fate of highly civilized states to have a set career before them to run, and then to yield the ascendancy to others. Thus, the people of Greece, from the time of the Trojan war to the coming of Alexander, pro-



ceeded to develop the utmost capacities of an imperfect confederacy of small republics; and that point attained, they fell. Rome had the destiny to do the utmost that could be done by the instrumentality of municipal institutions in the field of politics and war; and that task accomplished, she also fell. I consider it the destiny of the United States to people, cultivate, and civilize this Continent; and I anticipate no end of her power until the appointed work be done.

It is a great error, it seems to me, into which many persons fall, both at home and abroad, to attach the idea of instability to the institutions of the United States. The English have counted upon this from time to time, in their controversies with us; once they sought by intrigue to bring about a separation of the States; and at the present time there are those among the old Tory refugees in the British Provinces who confidently look for it. They may, I think, dismiss all such hopes. The stability of the United States is proved by results, and it may be proved by principles. There is no other government in Christendom, which through the same period has enjoyed the same domestic tranquillity as the United States,—the same exemption from wars,—the same easy working of public administration,—the same absence of insurrection, riot, or other forcible opposition to the laws,—the same continuity of general organization. The individuals and the presses among us, who infer the contrary from occasional disorders which occur in the country, are political Sybarites pained by the rumpling of a rose-leaf; they fail to remember that imperfection belongs to every thing human; that all evils are comparative; and that the disorders, public or private, among us, are as nothing compared with what is daily happening in France, England, Germany, Russia, Spain, Italy, and every where else in Europe,—countries, which have insurrections, revolutions, civil wars and national convulsions on a great scale, where we have but petty riots, individual acts of violence, or wordy dissensions in print or debate upon mere questions of expediency or of personality.

Such are the results. And these are answerable to the theory. It is of the nature of the institutions of the United States to reconcile the greatest mobility and adaptation to change in the relations of individuals and in ordinary legislation, with the greatest fixedness in the general principle. The Federal Government has a limited and specific sphere of action in our foreign and inter-state relations, and in those few things which are necessary to give unity and harmony to the great whole. To secure these objects, the Constitution provides for the direct representation of the individual citizens themselves in the lower House of Congress; and it acts directly upon the individual citizen in those things which are within the resort of the Federal power; which the old Confederation could not do; and which deficiency was one of the radical faults of that scheme of government. To the several States, on the other hand, are reserved the great mass of administrative pow-

er ; to secure which they choose the President by electoral colleges of States, and they are equally represented as States in the Senate. Hence, good ambition is diffused, and has a multitude of objects to work upon beneficially, and ample scope, not only in the political affairs of the Union, but if shut out or disappointed there, then still enough in those of the separate States. Hence, also, bad ambition is diffused, and is rendered harmless by diffusion, like a drop of poison in water ; for it never happens, that any ill disposed individual is able to combine a considerable number of States in projects injurious to the Union, because the disaffection or passion of one section or group of States is neutralized by the loyalty or calmness of the rest,—in consequence of their exemption from the local causes or individual influences which produce the supposed disaffection or passion. And therefore the gradual enlargement of the Union strengthens rather than weakens it ; because it continually tends to increase the odds against the efficiency of any local or sectional cause of disloyalty or disturbance. Which admirable effect of the enlargement of the Union is the more to be prized, because it is in harmony with other features of our institutions ; since the Federal system imparts to the United States the capacity of exterior strength, and thus enables them to aspire to greatness, without prejudice to the democratic principle, which informs and animates the local institutions of the several States.

To that general similarity of opinion and of manners among us which tends more than any thing else to make of a great nation one people,—to that identity of political institutions which binds us together by ties that are the more surely stringent for being almost insensible,—to the one great democratic doctrine, which is the very spirit and essence of those institutions,—to the general harmony created by the facilities of commercial intercourse, the sense of common interest, the intermixture of personal relations, and the natural dependence of the different sections of the Union one upon another,—to that universal respect for the Constitution, which the conviction of its theoretical excellence, and the perception of its benefits and advantages, engender,—to the physical and moral strength, which the geographical peculiarities of the country, and the character of its people, impart,—to all these, there is a great and melancholy exception, in the existence of slavery and the condition of the black race in the States of the South. Would to God that this cup,—drugged with bitterness to the very brim,—might pass from us. Not only is the existence of slavery a grievous and almost immedicable evil in itself, not only does it involve a future which cannot be contemplated without anxiety, but moreover, great as is the immediate wealth derived from it, it is the most obvious drawback on the material strength of the Union. For the people of the South, resolved at all risks to maintain negro slavery, or unable perhaps to see their way clearly to any other alternative, exert themselves incessantly to secure to



the slave interest the control of the Federal Government for its protection, and continually recur to empirical changes in the national policy in the vain hope thus to bring up their local condition to the level of that of the North, not seeing as they ought that our superior prosperity under all the changes they introduce is the effect of immovable natural laws, which delight to reward the labor of the free. And the people of the North are thus aggrieved by the measures which the interests of slavery call for, or seem to call for, at the same time that our settled convictions of right and wrong lead us to condemn slavery as a great moral and political evil, and to desire its cessation, though our fealty to the Constitution withholds us from attempting any direct interference with it. Owing to which considerations, slavery is the most serious and threatening of all the causes of dissension among the members of the Union. And it is also the weak point of the country on the side of its foreign relations, especially since the abolition of negro-slavery in the British West Indies. That it is likely, however, in any present aspect of the question, to hasten the dissolution of the Union, I do not believe; because I know that the North most anxiously deprecates such an event, and is more unanimous and fixed upon this point than concerning any thing else whatever; and I think that the South, also, the more it reflects on the subject, the more it will be convinced that the disruption of the Union by them, would be, to them and their peculiar interests, the mere madness of an act of deliberate suicide, which neither the whole, nor a majority, of the slave-holding States could be persuaded to commit.

Slavery consigns the Southern States to perpetual weakness, foreign and domestic, and to perpetual discontent; whilst liberty fills the North with men and with riches. The weight of physical strength in the United States is ever tending towards the North, and especially the North West. It is there that new communities grow up with such prodigious celerity, by emigration from the Eastern States and from Europe. In the first Congress, as among the original thirteen States, and as between those which have now abolished slavery and those which have not, the votes were, I believe, by the census of 1790, 35 to 32; as between the same States (deducting Maine) the votes are by the census of 1830, 99 to 61; as between all the seventeen old States, adding Maine and Vermont on the one side, and Kentucky and Tennessee on the other, the votes are changed to the ratio of 112 to 87, from that of 37 to 32; while in the new States of the North West and South West, the proportion, by the census of 1830,—as between Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, on this side, and Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Alabama and Mississippi, on the other,—was as 30 to 13; and the disproportion will be still greater in 1840, without reckoning the slow increase of Florida as contrasted with the rapid growth of Wisconsin. Such are the fruits of liberty on the one hand, and of slavery on the other; of the observance or the violation of the everlasting laws of Nature.

In addition to the existence of negro slavery in the Southern States, there is one other great fact, which mars the political unity of North America. This Continent was originally settled, and for a long time occupied, by Colonies dependent on Europe. The independence of the United States was the beginning of a new order of things; and as political doctrine is progressive, and the true democratic principle of self-government is contagious to all around, so soon as the favorable moment arrived, Mexico, in common with the rest of Spanish America, raised the standard of independence, and followed our example of separation from Europe. Though placed within or near to the tropics, so far as regards the seat of her power and the bulk of her population, yet the domain of the Mexican Republic extends north nearly ten degrees in the rear of the Western States. Into that space, the population of the United States has already begun to expand itself, and will continue to expand in the inevitable progress of events. It avails nothing to deplore this as an operation injurious to Mexico; the thing happens: it is an existing fact to which we cannot shut our eyes; and whether in the form of a separate government as in the present case of Texas, or otherwise, it is evident to demonstration that so much of that region as lies within the temperate zone,—destitute now of inhabitants, unoccupied and unvalued by its nominal owners, rich vacant lands alluring onward the footsteps of the daring and hardy pioneer,—will by almost imperceptible degrees become the possession and the abode of Anglo Americans. Nor, if they did not carry with them the institution of domestic slavery, need their progress in that direction be the subject of serious regret; but the contrary. We at least have nothing to apprehend in that quarter.

But on the northern and eastern frontiers of the United States, overhanging us from sea to sea like a lowering storm-cloud, are the British Provinces, still dependent on Europe. That, is the point of peril. There, is monarchy in its worst form, that of the forcible occupation, by a foreign prince, of a country whose natural position, and social constitution, and contiguity to us, impel it towards independence and freedom and self-government. There, is the fruitful source of perpetual border difficulties; for that long inland frontier, of river, and plain, and lake, is utterly incapable of being guarded by fortifications or armies against the hazards of war, or withheld from illicit commercial intercourse either in peace or war. Suppose New England and New York to be separate nations: Could any conceivable number of garrisons or custom houses build up an impassable barrier between them? Impossible. And yet such is the relative situation of the United States and the British Provinces. And there, is the pernicious fact, which forces us into the field of European politics, and gives to a European Power control over us. The war of 1776 was waged from Canada. The war of 1812 was waged from Canada. The next, and the next, and the only foreign

wars, which we have any cause to dread, will, if the present state of things lasts, be waged from Canada. For while the rest of Europe, if it would assail us at all, must assail us by sea, and can only strike at our ocean frontier, and will be impotent against us there by reason of the extent of our coast which excludes the idea of blockade, and the difficulty of transporting great armies over sea, and the impossibility of sustaining them without a fixed and sure foothold on shore,—while such is our relation to the rest of Europe, England, on the contrary, has her great naval depots and military arsenals on our eastern and northern land frontiers, and by the St. Lawrence and the Lakes has an open avenue into the heart of the United States. Hence, when we have been at war with her, the conflict has raged, not on the sea coast merely, but on the interior soil of New York, Ohio, and Michigan, a region which ought to be as inaccessible to European armies as if a wall of adamant rose around it on all sides.

But this unnatural condition of things cannot and will not last. The British Colonies are approaching to that maturity of separate strength, which brings with it independence. When they have reached that maturity, they will as surely sunder from the Mother Country, as the ripe fruit drops from the tree. In the case of them, as of other American Colonies, why should they cross the Atlantic for men to govern them? Why not govern themselves? Why should the flowers of their prosperity serve only to give honey for foreign drones to live on? Why should not the natural resources of their country be developed for the benefit of its own people? They must and they will be. There is no dominant and all-pervading aristocracy in those provinces to assimilate their condition to that of Britain; the natural tendency of their social condition is towards democracy, and assimilation with us; and that tendency is enforced and forwarded by the inevitable influence of our proximity to them. They have been misgoverned, grossly, wickedly misgoverned. There is no doubt of this. It is proclaimed by themselves; it is declared in the British Parliament; it is admitted by each successive Colonial Secretary; it is spoken out in language not to be mistaken, the language of insurrection and civil war. It is monstrous for Americans to deny that the Canadas have been misgoverned; it is idle for any body to deny it. I engage to exhibit a parallel of every one of the specifications of tyranny set forth in our Declaration of Independence, by the same or greater acts of tyranny perpetrated by Great Britain in the Canadas. Not that England is a worse mistress to them than any other foreign Power would be. Far from it. England, with all her faults, and I take pleasure in making the admission, England is a wiser, a milder, a purer, a better, ruler of her American Colonies, than any other of the Great Powers of Europe has been. But *colony* and *liberty* are ideas incompatible. They can no more exist together than water and fire. The Canadas have greater, far greater, causes of complaint,



than we had, when we belonged to Great Britain. Our colonial councils were elective, theirs are appointed by the Crown; and that is one of the points at issue in their present troubles. We had town governments; they are forbidden to have them, because England considers, and justly, that town governments are so many nurseries of freedom. We had roads, they have next to none; we had public schools, they have absolutely none; we had but few foreign troops quartered upon us, they have great armies; we were permitted to bear arms, they are not; we, in short, possessed all the means and instruments of progression and freedom, which have been carefully withheld from them, through fear, if they possessed these means and instruments, that they also, after our example, would aspire to independence. At the present time, they are consigned to the tender mercies of military despotism, martial law, and occupation of the country by armed hosts of imported mercenaries; their trusted public men cut off by the judicial murder of courts martial, or driven into exile; their villages given up to sack and conflagration; their young men, some sabred in the field without quarter, others murdered in cold blood, and without trial, after battle is over; their women violated; the bodies of their slain patriots left to rot on the ground unburied, or turned over to beasts to devour! God of justice, where sleeps thy thunder? Is there no vengeance for those who do those deeds of ignominy and horror? Is it to be endured, does it not make the blood boil, that Europeans,—hireling soldiers of fortune, aliens to the land and its people, the base and sordid tools of transatlantic lust of power, should pollute the rich soil of America with such enormities? We shudder at the recital of these very acts of horror, when perpetrated by Turks in Greece, or by Russians in Poland. Shall they happen at our door-stone, and awaken no condemnation? They shall not, they will not, until the Declaration of Independence be expunged from our memories, and every sentiment of patriotism and freedom, which hallowed the Revolution, be extinguished in our hearts.

When the time comes, as come it surely will, for those Provinces to be independent, then will there be more complete unity of political principle on this Continent. It will come ere long; for not England herself, or if England, not the Provinces, can submit to the military occupation of the Canadas as a permanent system of government. Or will the Mother Country reduce the Colonies to a desert and call that peace? No, they will become free, and their freedom will be for the common benefit of America. Independent, in close association with us, enjoying together with us the navigation of the St. Lawrence and the Lakes, the Atlantic fisheries, and the fur trade of the North West, each of us delivered from border controversies and both possessed of similar political institutions, North America would then present one harmonious American whole, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Sea.

Fellow citizens, the ideas, which I have thus presented to you, may be thought peculiar, they may seem to be startling, but they are no Utopian speculations. They are plain matters of fact. North America will be independent, it will be republican, it will be Anglo-American. This result will be reached by the (for the most part) peaceful progress of peaceful events. And its general effect will be a peaceful one.—What is the prolific cause of so great and frequent wars in Europe? Evidently, the subdivision of that Continent into many distinct nations, speaking different languages, having dissimilar ideas and institutions, and adverse interests, that war only can adjust. What is the remedy proposed by the friends of peace, for this unhappy state of things? The tables of the last Congress were covered with memorials, praying that the United States would institute measures for a great league of all the states of Christendom, to be represented in a permanently organized Congress of Nations, which should regulate their common interests, and adjudicate upon their respective disputes, so as to settle these by peaceful counsel instead of by force. The same thing has been long ago proposed in Europe by friends of peace there. But those national diversities of theirs, which I just indicated, have stood in the way of the adoption of any such permanent system in Europe. And the United States could not unite with them, or any of them, in such a system, without embarking our peace and welfare in the same bottom with theirs, entering into entangling alliances with them, and in fact surrendering our own national sovereignty to a new sovereignty governed by the proposed Congress of Nations. But, *on this Continent*, the scheme is feasible and congenial to the natural condition of things. If the British Provinces were independent, and associated with us, the object would be at once attainable so far as regards the future of North America, inhabited for the chief part by one race, speaking mostly one language, having identical institutions, and imbued with the same opinions and ideas, with its millions of people, not split up into hostile nations, but peacefully combined together for the promotion of their common good. What a noble anticipation! What a glorious prospect! Is this a mere vision of the fancy? I will not believe it. If it be, I would rather continue to dream this dream, than to awaken to the poor reality of political strife on transient or trivial objects, and the vain toil of public effort unblest by great or elevated aims. For I believe, with one of the most brilliant of modern writers, that “Legislators can create no rewards and invent no penalties equal to those which are silently engendered by society itself, while it maintains, elaborated into a system, the desire of glory and the dread of shame;” and I desire, therefore, to see my countrymen lift their minds to the level of their country’s destiny, and to have them feel that their own fame is identified with her’s.

Fellow citizens, I have addressed you thus far, as the people of the United States; but I have in conclusion a very few words to

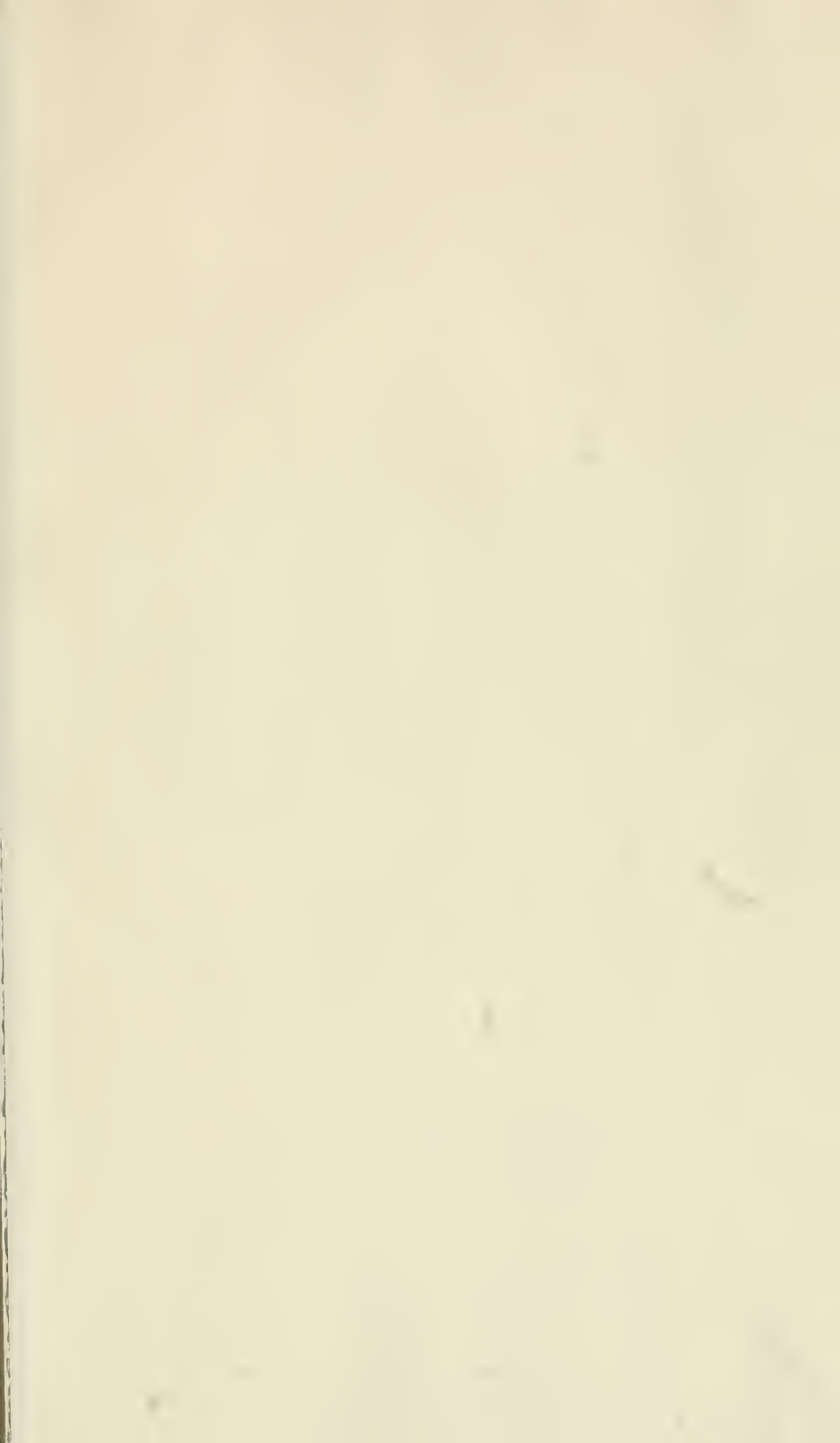
say to you as the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This Commonwealth is, in my opinion, not only better instructed, —more devoted to knowledge, good morals, and religion,—but favored also with a more general diffusion of competency and comparative wealth, than most, if not than any, of her sister States of the Union. At the same time, it must happen, as the public lands become settled, as the limits of the Union spread, as

Westward the course of empire takes its way,

that our nominal power is diminished, relatively to the whole Union. Our territory is limited. We have few peculiar natural advantages. But the Union is that wide field, in which we have the preference over foreigners, for our coasting vessels, our freighting ships, our fish, oil, manufactures, and money capital. Our prosperity is the fruit of the intelligence, cultivation, industry, enterprise, frugality, and skill of our people, exerted by sea and land. And that prosperity is fostered of course, and in part maintained, by the progression of the Union. Hence, I have been accustomed to consider the settlement of the public lands, and the wider market thus opened to the productions of our industry, to be of more pecuniary importance to Massachusetts than the hoarding of those lands for the contingent and uncertain benefit of revenue or distribution. Besides that emigration to the West is the great safety-valve of our population, and frees us from all the dangers of the poverty, and discontent, and consequent disorders, which always spring up in a community when the number of its inhabitants has outrun its capacity to afford due recompense to honest industry and ambition. And this Commonwealth has the means ever, to retain a just share of influence in the public councils. Let her,—under the guaranty and guardianship of the great constitutional principle of STATE RIGHTS which are the especial security of the States that are at the same time rich and small,—so protected, let her continue to tread firmly the path of intellectual, moral, and industrial cultivation and superiority,—let her make wise selections of her public men and extend to them a generous confidence,—let her keep clear of the besetting folly of mankind to sacrifice objects which are large and lasting for the sake of those which are small and transient,—in a word, let her persevere in the policy it has been her pride to follow hitherto, of dedicating herself to the inseparable interests of public and private virtue,—and she will never cease to be loved devotedly by her children, and respected and honored by all others, betide what may to the general fortunes of herself or of the United States.

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